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Indian Creek revs up shopping carts

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Indian Creek students cleared the hallways Friday to make room for a group of their classmates to race four shopping carts, equipped with car batteries, steering handles and small motors.

Of course, only two of the carts actually made it off the starting line.

And they accelerated only up to walking pace.

But that's besides the point, sophomore Cody Doll said.

Sophomore Coy Doll works on the Obama Mobile during transportation class at Indian Creek High School.

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The shopping cart race was part of a hands-on lesson in Indian Creek High School's transportation class, taught by Travis East.

The 17 students in the class turned common shopping carts into land vehicles equipped with small motors, car batteries and steering rods, which the students assembled themselves.

PHOTO BY JASON WHITE

They lined up their carts in front of the school's main office and made a few final-minute adjustments, making sure the batteries were properly hooked up and the wheels were secured tightly onto the carts.

Doll and sophomore Rick Majors won the race after a minor setback: Their cart fell apart after Doll hopped in and fell out the back.

"Uh-oh," he said.

Meanwhile, senior Eric Teeters had steered his motorized grocery cart halfway down the hall.

But Doll wasn't about to give up on his team's cart, dubbed the "Obama Mobile" despite the objections of Majors, who supported Sen. John McCain in the 2008 presidential race.

"There were just a lot of problems," Doll said. "Stuff breaks. Some things wouldn't fit."

Taking over as driver, Majors climbed into the cart, and Doll worked to hook the motor and battery back up. Meanwhile, their classmate's cart disappeared around a corner.

Doll held the battery plugs in place, and the cart started and headed down the hall. Luckily for them, Teeters' cart stopped working about halfway through the race, so the Obama Mobile took the lead.

The cart took about 12 minutes to travel around the hall and back to the main office, setting a record for the

cart-racing event, East said.

Last year, only one cart completed an entire lap, taking more than 20 minutes to do so, East said.

One of the lessons that students learn from the cart race is that building a vehicle isn't as easy as it looks, East said.

"People get in a car and drive, and they take it for granted," he said.

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